

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SJM 8001

As Passed House:

April 14, 2009

Brief Description: Requesting the United States fish and wildlife service to work cooperatively with the state's regulatory agencies and energy producers with respect to the federal endangered species act.

Sponsors: Senators Hatfield and Haugen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture & Natural Resources: 3/12/09, 3/19/09 [DP].

Floor Activity

Passed House: 4/14/09, 97-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requests that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service work cooperatively with the State of Washington and its energy producers to resolve federal Endangered Species Act issues in a manner that allows continued development of the state's wind and other alternative energy resources.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Blake, Chair; Grant-Herriot, Vice Chair; Chandler, Ranking Minority Member; Smith, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Jacks, Kretz, Ormsby, Pearson and Warnick.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives McCoy, Nelson and Van De Wege.

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117)

Background:

Renewable Energy Requirements.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Initiative 937 (I-937) was adopted in 2007. I-937 sets targets for energy conservation and the use of eligible renewable resources by the state's utilities that serve more than 25,000 customers. "Eligible renewable resource" includes resources such as wind, solar energy, and certain biomass energy. The term "eligible renewable resource" also includes incremental electricity produced from efficiency improvements completed after March 31, 1999, to hydroelectric dams.

Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction.

In 2007 the Legislature adopted goals for green house gas (GHG) emissions reduction. These goals include a reduction in state GHG emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2020 and a reduction to 50 percent below the 1990 levels by the year 2050.

Federal Endangered Species Act.

The federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) provides protection for threatened and endangered species. An endangered species is a species in danger of extinction throughout all or part of its historic range. A threatened species is a species that is deemed likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future. The ESA generally prohibits the taking of protected species, which includes harassing, harming, or killing such species. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has primary responsibility for administering the ESA with regards to threatened and endangered wildlife.

Summary of Bill:

The Legislature asks that the USFWS work cooperatively with the State of Washington and its energy producers to resolve federal ESA issues in a manner that allows continued development of the state's wind and other alternative energy resources.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) It is important that government be proactive and develop meaningful solutions to increase alternative energy production. There are some potential issues related to the ESA in the development of wind energy.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Jack Field, Washington Cattlemen's Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.